

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support



Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce

March 17, 2004

Maxene Spellman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Ste. 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Letter of Support for Grant Application to California Coastal Conservancy for the acquisition of the Montini Property.

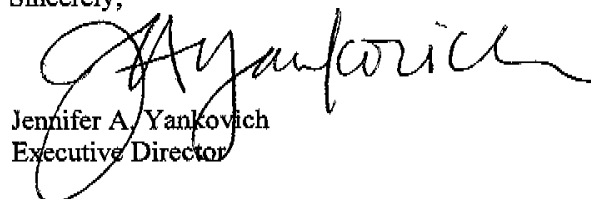
Dear Ms. Spellman:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors to express the Chamber's support of efforts by the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District in working with the City of Sonoma to acquire portions of the Montini Ranch Property.

This acquisition is an excellent model of City and County governments working together to leverage fund for the preservation of open space and conservation of a regionally important hillside in the heart of Sonoma Valley. The successful acquisition of these lands is also important to the community for accomplishing balanced growth for future development.

Please contact me if you feel the Chamber could be of further assistance with this project.

Sincerely,



Jennifer A. Yankovich
Executive Director

C David Goodison, Planning Administrator
City of Sonoma

651-A Broadway, Sonoma, California 95476 • Telephone: (707) 996-1033 • Fax: (707) 996-9402
email: info@sonomachamber.com • web site: www.sonomachamber.com

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support



**Sonoma Valley
Trails Committee**

P.O. Box 483, El Verano, CA 95433

Paul Morabito
Chairman of the Board, State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Ste. 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

March 12, 2004

Dear Mr. Morabito,

As president of the Sonoma Valley Trails Committee, an organization that has worked for over 20 years to promote walking, bicycling and equestrian paths, I am very excited about the potential purchase of the Montini property by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. Our entire organization enthusiastically supports their request for grant funding to assist with the acquisition of this outstanding open space surrounding the City of Sonoma.

The value of the recreational and scenic resource offered by the Montini property is extremely high. This acquisition would both protect Sonoma's intimate blend of urban and rural landscapes by preserving the City's hillside greenbelt and historic backdrop and would significantly enhance the trail opportunities for Sonoma State Historic Park's tens of thousands of annual visitors. The hundreds of thousands of visitors who come to Sonoma each year would also benefit.

The success and popularity of the recently completed Overlook Trail on City of Sonoma property is a testament to our community's support and commitment to open space and trails. As you may be aware, a ballot initiative preserved that area as open space and thousands of hours of volunteer time have gone into creating the trail and staffing the docent program which grew up around it. If the Montini property becomes part of our protected open space, you can be sure the community will embrace the opportunity to develop its trail potential and provide long-term stewardship for the area.

Thank you for your consideration of the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District's request. We appreciate the many contributions the State Coastal Conservancy has made to preserving open space and creating parks in California. We hope you will support this project as well.

Sincerely,

Penny Hartman
President, Sonoma Valley Trails Committee

cc: Via facsimile to Maxene Spellman at 510-286-3840

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

City of Sonoma

Administration
No. 1 The Plaza
Sonoma, California 95476-9000



Sonoma Sister Cities:

Chambolle-Musigny, France
Greve in Chianti, Italy
Kaniv, Ukraine
Patzcuaro, Michoacan, Mexico

July 7, 2003

Maxine Spellman
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Subject: Conservancy Grant for Acquisition of Montini Property - Sonoma

Dear Ms. Spellman:

As you are aware, the City of Sonoma and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District are working in partnership to preserve the historic and highly visible Montini Ranch near downtown Sonoma.

The Montini Ranch occupies a prominent place in the City's history and makes up the majority of the visible greenbelt that surrounds the City. This open space and public access project would positively impact the City in many significant ways. Acquisition of the property would facilitate easy access to parkland and trails from downtown Sonoma; it would add to the Vallejo State Historic Park, protect the prominent scenic backdrop surrounding the City; and create trail connections between downtown, the State Historic Park and the City's Mountain Cemetery trail.

The Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has negotiated a transaction which includes purchase of 150 acres in fee title and 86 acres of conservation easement. The District has now presented a Letter of Intent to purchase these interests from the Annie Montini Trust and the offer is being reviewed by the seller. While the District is expected to generously fund a majority of the purchase price, partnership funding from other sources will be critical to the success of the project.

The Sonoma City Council strongly supports this project. In fact, the Montini property is of such importance to the City that we have allocated a substantial amount of general fund money for its acquisition at a time of great financial uncertainty, given the State's budget problems. The City encourages the State Coastal Conservancy to join the City and District as a funding partner on this important open space, park and trail project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (707) 996-2797.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Dick Ashford".

Dick Ashford, Mayor

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JUL 08 2003

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.

c: Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support



State of California • The Resources Agency

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION • P.O. Box 942896 • Sacramento, CA 94296-0001
(916) 653-8380

Ruth Coleman, Director

DEC 09 2003

Ms. Andrea Mackenzie, Executive Director
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation
and Open Space District
747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100
Santa Rosa, California 95401-4850

Dear Ms. Mackenzie:

Over the past two years you have kept Department officials advised of your progress in attempting to purchase the Montini Family Ranch so that title could be passed to the State and the Property could be incorporated into the Sonoma State Historic Park in exchange for: 1) a commitment that it be used for public outdoor recreation; and 2) the reservation of a conservation easement by the Open Space District. During this period the Department has advised you of our enthusiasm for this project, and we have encouraged your pursuit of the purchase.

I understand that the Montini property makes a logical addition to the existing State Park because it offers an opportunity to expand the trail system into the hillside that rises to a lookout at 450 feet. The trail system, once in place, links to an adjacent locally owned and managed park, called Sonoma Lookout Trail. With the Montini property addition, residents and tourists in the City of Sonoma will be able to walk from downtown through the historic structures and up into some of the last oak woodlands surrounding the City. These woodlands are important not just for the recreational experience they provide, but also for the habitat connectivity they extend along the Mayacamas Range.

I understand that you have now negotiated a purchase agreement for the Montini Property and are in the process of finishing your due diligence with a likely closing date in the near future.

Under ordinary circumstances I would not hesitate to recommend to the Department of Finance and the State Public Works Board the immediate transfer of fee title from the Montini family (subject to the transfer constraints outlined in the first paragraph above). Unfortunately the circumstances are anything but ordinary. The State is facing a budget deficit of historic scope and a return to normalcy is probably more than several fiscal years away. In the interim, the Department is coping with budget cuts, a hiring freeze, and an understandable reluctance on the part of the Department of Finance and the State Public Works Board to approve park acquisitions that increase the State's operation and maintenance obligations.

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DATE 12-11-03
C: AM/Rbh/PR
D. file

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

Ms. Andrea Mackenzie
Page Two
DEC 09 2003

I understand that it was never anticipated by the Open Space District that it would have to take title and incur the necessary operation and maintenance costs. In view of this, I recognize that your agency, in executing the purchase agreement, needs some level of assurance that the State will pursue its efforts to ultimately take title to the Montini property (subject to the transfer constraints previously mentioned) so it can be incorporated into the Sonoma State Historic Park. Accordingly, please accept my assurance those transactions will be a continuing goal of the Department and will be pressed to what we anticipate to be a successful conclusion at the State Public Works Board at the earliest possible time.

Additionally, I want to give you my further assurance that the Department, during the interim and within budget and legal constraints, will assist in the planning, operation, and maintenance of the Montini property for low intensity public outdoor use that is compatible with the public use of the Sonoma State Historic Park and consistent with the limitations on the Open Space District's expenditure of sales tax revenues for that purpose.

Again, let me express my hope that these interim difficulties will be resolved and soon forgotten as generations of Californians enjoy the wonderful scenic and recreational benefits of the Montini Property.

Sincerely,



Ruth Coleman
Director

cc: Ms. Kathleen Brennan-Hunter
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation
and Open Space District

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

**5850 Grove St.
Sonoma, CA 95476**

**Tel: 707-935-3410
FAX: 707-935-3250
e-mail: patted@sonic.net**

To: Paul Morabito, Chairman, State Coastal Conservancy
FAX No.: 510-286-3840
From: Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Date: March 8, 2004
No. of Pages, including cover sheet: 1

Dear Mr. Morabito:

I am a 12-year veteran of the Advisory Committee to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and am writing to urge the Coastal Conservancy at its March 25 meeting to approve a grant to the District to assist it in purchasing the Montini property near the city of Sonoma.

There is no higher priority purchase for the people of the city. The Montini property is a critical greenbelt north of the city. Its preservation would not only save the superb vista for the residents of the city but also for the thousands of tourists who visit it every year. The property is also an ideal location for public trails, with views to San Francisco and San Pablo Bay.

I have been personally involved in this project for many years and join many others in the excitement of getting closer to realizing our goal. The Coastal Conservancy's assistance is critical.

Sincerely,



Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.

cc: Maxine Spellman
City Councilman Dick Ashford
District General Manager Andrea Mackenzie

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

KAREN COLLINS

275 FRANCE STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 2034
SONOMA, CALIFORNIA 95476

707-835-0195

March 4, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
Via Fax: 510+286-3840

Dear Mr. Morabito:

It is my understanding that the Coastal Conservancy will be considering a request from the Sonoma County Open Space District for funds to assist with the purchase of the Montini property, which serves as the scenic backdrop for the City of Sonoma. The property includes one of the last remaining open grass lands in the City and an oak covered hillside that lends so much character to our historic village.

I am particularly interested in the property's potential to expand the current Sonoma Overlook Trail, which lies on an adjacent piece of property. Several years ago, while we were in the middle of creating this trail, a luxury hotel chain sought to place a resort on the hillside. Sonoma citizens placed an initiative on the ballot and the resort idea was defeated 77 to 23 per cent.

During the course of the initiative campaign, a series of community meetings was held where participants were asked to voice their preference for one of the following options for the hillside: #1. leave the property the way it was (croded, trashed, uncovered "historic" dump, etc.); #2. clean up the property and provide limited public access (i.e. a trail); #3. allow limited development; or #4. allow full-scale commercial development (i.e. the hotel). The overwhelming choice was option #2. The property was then cleaned up, the dump removed and a low impact walking trail was created by the community at large through a combination of donations and sweat labor. This 2-mile path has become beloved by both locals and visitors to our community; it provides the City's only natural walking trail. It offers stunning views of our valley – and on clear days you can see all the way to San Francisco.

It has long been the hope that the Montini property could be preserved and the trail expanded to connect to the Sonoma State Historic Park that lies adjacent. As the Chair of the committee that created the trail, I can assure the Conservancy that this community would again band together to develop the trail. Two of our former Mayors, Ken Brown and Al Mazza, have stated publicly that the Overlook Trail effort was one of the most successful community projects they had ever seen. The interest is high and experienced participants are in place to make it happen.

Mr. Morabito, we love our hillside. We hope that the Conservancy will see fit to assist in the preservation of this wonderful piece of property that means so much to our community.

Sincerely,



Karen Collins
Former Chair, Sonoma Overlook Trail
Former Chair, California State Recreational Trails Commission

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

March 5, 2004

Mr. Paul Morabito
Chairman of the Board
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Ste 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Morabito:

We are writing to encourage you to support the acquisition of the Montini property as open space. As co-chairs of the Sonoma Overlook Trail (SOT) task force, we are strong supporters of open space in and around the town of Sonoma. The SOT is on City of Sonoma property immediately east of the Montini Property, and above the Mountain Cemetery. Members of our task force, our community, and many visitors to Sonoma express a deep appreciation of the natural areas near town. These areas provide the opportunity to walk in the hills, to enjoy beautiful wildflowers and other native vegetation, to observe local wildlife and to gaze at spectacular views to as far away as the San Francisco Bay and skyline. The Montini property would provide a perfect addition to the adjacent City open space and historical California State Parks properties nearby. Residents of Sonoma place great value on the scenic backdrop supplied by the Montini and City properties. Many residents walk on a daily basis, and many of those enjoy walking in natural areas. The Montini property is the last large open space near Sonoma. Please help to ensure that this beautiful property remains open and available for use by the Sonoma community. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Hope Nisson
3771 Cory Lane
Sonoma, CA 95476



Jacqueline A. Steuer
361 Nicoli Lane
Sonoma, CA 95476

cc: Maxene Spellman

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MAR 8 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.

EXHIBIT 2: Letters of Support

March 8, 2004

Paul Morabito, Chairman of the Board,
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Ste. 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Morabito:

I am writing to urge you to assist the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District in **purchasing the Montini property in the town of Sonoma.**

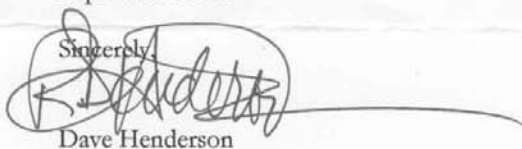
As a 25-year resident of Sonoma I can attest to the fact that public protection of this splendid property will play a key role in:

- avoiding further fragmentation and loss of our overall wildlife habitat;
- preserving a terrific oak habitat and one of our last remaining grassland parcels;
- maintaining a critical section of the greenbelt that defines our city;
- keeping intact the northern hillslope backdrop that is a unique viewshed for Sonoma.

As a member of the Sierra Club and the Sonoma Valley Trails Committee, I am delighted that this property could offer expanded recreational resources to our community, connecting up with our heavily-used bike path and with the recently-built Sonoma Overlook Trail (SOT), which has become so popular among locals and tourists alike..

I thank you for anything the California Coastal Conservancy can do to help us in this important effort.

Sincerely,



Dave Henderson

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MAR 09 2004

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.